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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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VIET MINH CONTINUE TO RECEIVE AID FROM COMMUNIST CHINA

Comment: This report presents information from non-Communist sources on the type of aid the Viet Minh receives from Communist China, the strength of the Viet Minh Army as compared with the French, and the deployment of reinforcements from China in November 1952.

Viet Minh Troops Receive Training and Equipment

According to the pro-KMT Penang Kuang-hua Jih-pao of 21 November 1952, the Viet Minh showed signs in its recent offensive of having received large-scale military and technical aid from Communist China. As proof, the paper cited the initial appearance of antiaircraft guns, heavy artillery, and other weapons; the great improvement in the technical handling of weapons; and the type of Viet Minh weapons captured by the French.

The newspaper also said that intelligence information from reliable sources confirms that Communist China has trained and has equipped approximately 75,000 Viet Minh troops, divided into the following divisions: 303d, 308th, 312th, 316th, 320th, 325th, and 351th. These troops, of great fighting strength, use powerful Chinese ammunition and are equipped with US- and Japanese-type weapons, including machine guns, 57-mm and 70-mm antiaircraft guns, etc., made in Communist China. The paper stated that large groups of Chinese Communist cadres have been sent to serve as officers in various echelons of the Viet Minh army.

Strength of Viet Minh Army

The same newspaper tabulated data showing the growth of the Viet Minh military power within the past year and comparing Viet Minh strength with that of the French army in Vietnam.

- 1 -

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Strength of the Viet Minh Army, 1951-1952

| | <u>1951</u> | <u>1952</u> |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Regular army | 15,600 | 50,000 |
| Regional troops | 10,000 | 16,000 |
| People's militia | 5,000 | 12,000 |

Comparative Fire Power of French and Viet Minh Forces

| | <u>French Army</u> (per regiment) | <u>Viet Minh Army</u> (per regiment) |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Automatic rifles | 30 | 60 |
| Light machine guns | 133 | 200 |
| Carbines | 624 | 300 |
| Artillery mortars | [No information given] | |
| Machine guns | [No information given] | |
| Men | 834 | 6,000 |

On the basis of the foregoing data, and considering the respective problems of both sides, the paper noted no preponderance of power on either side at present. The paper called transportation the chief difficulty of the Viet Minh, and fighting in isolated hill areas a major hardship for the French. "Whether the present stalemate will shift to give one side advantage over the other," ventured the newspaper, "depends on the one hand, upon whether Communist China will risk joining the war, and on the other, upon future French and, particularly, US moves."

Movement of Troops from China to Viet Minh

According to the Kuang-hua Jih-pao of 4 November, information received in T'ai-pei reveals that 27,000 Soviet-equipped Viet Minh troops have completed their training in Nanning, Kwangsi, and are now returning to the Viet Minh front.

Viet Minh troops under the command of Chang Ch'i-sheng (張祺生) [Truong Ky Sinh?] have arrived in Viet Minh territory and are preparing to proceed to the battle front, according to the newspaper. The paper added that Viet Minh troops are getting a continuous supply of Soviet arms and ammunition via Nanning.

China-Indochina Border Area

The independent Rangoon Chung-kuo Jih-pao of 26 November 1952 cited a Pan Asia news report that Peiping had recently deployed two divisions to Kwangtung to strengthen Communist forces in that area. According to the source, the mission of these two divisions, presently stationed at Kuang-pu, is not to threaten Hong Kong, but to protect Viet Minh supply lines from anti-Communist guerrilla attacks.

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- 2 -

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